IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ALBERTA

ANNUAL REPORT
1989 – 1990

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Report covers the Advisory Committee's activities and experiences from January, 1989 to December 1990. During this period, the Advisory Committee had the privilege to have served two Ministers, and the Honourable Norm Weiss, MLA for Fort McMurray and Minister of Career Development and Employment.

The Alberta Government continues to appreciate the benefits and importance of immigration to maintain Alberta's continue growth. In the fall of 1990 and in response to demonstrated need, the Immigration and Settlement Services unit became a Division of Alberta Career Development and Employment. We believe this pro-action will bear fruit for all in the near future.

By an large, the Alberta government's initiatives in immigration and settlement services are in the right direction towards serving the need of new Canadians as well as ensuring continue growth of its economic base, and prosperity of Albertans.

Alberta's demographics and social-economic environments are dynamic forces in action. In order to better reflect the needs of, and serve new Canadians in Alberta, it is important for the Alberta Government to continue its vision on matters pertaining to immigration and settlement services, and enjoy contributions from all Albertans.

Members met on regular intervals to review, discuss, and research on matters pertaining to immigration and settlement services. They have also attended community activities, functions hosted by settlement agencies, and events of the annual Immigration Week co-hosted by Immigration Canada and Alberta Career Development and Employment.

In the period covered in this report, the Committee focused its attention on a number of issues. It searched for opportunities for new Canadians in smaller Alberta centres, studied issues of cross cultural understanding, reviewed accreditation process for foreign-trained professionals, examined English as a Second Language program, analyzed the Canada-Alberta Immigration Agreement of 1985, and explored the working environment of domestic workers and their plight in our land of plenty. It should be noted that majority of the Committee's work is of an ongoing nature subjected to forces that continue to evolve and change with time.

The Committee is pleased that it has presented its findings, observations, and recommendations in a report format on one subject matter to the Honourable Norm Weiss, Minister of Career Development and Employment. It is the "Report on Business and Settlement Opportunities for new Canadians in Smaller Centres in Alberta". In December of 1990, the Committee was in the final stages of formulating its findings and recommendations regarding its analysis on the Canada-Alberta Immigration Agreement of 1985, and its pursuit on issues relating to immigration and cross cultural understanding. Final reports on these two issues are forthcoming in the very near future.

In December of 1990, the Advisory Committee suffered a great loss as a result of the sudden death of its Chairman, the late Mr. Haider Dhanani.

II. BUSINESS AND SETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SMALLER CENTRES IN ALBERTA

The primary objectives of this study are to identify potential business opportunities, socio-economic environment, and local sentiments that new Canadians can expect in smaller centres in Alberta.

Nine target communities in four geographic regions were visited. In-depth discussions were held with both elected and appointed representatives of these communities. Based on its research, observations, and deliberation, the Advisory Committee presented to the Honourable Norm Weiss a report that contains its observations, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations. In summary, the major recommendations of that report are:

1) Smaller Alberta communities are excellent places for immigrants to start a successful business, to bring up a happy family, and to adapt to a new way of life;
2) These communities do have untapped resources conducive to business and settlement opportunities;
3) Smaller communities appreciate and welcome the resources and cultures that new Canadians bring with them; and
4) Representatives of these communities have expressed a strong willingness to promote harmonious social, cultural, and economic cross-participation.

III. IMMIGRATION AND CROSS CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING - PHASE I

The object of this exercise is to search out and appraise public sentiments on immigration and settlement issues in Alberta.

The Committee has searched out a number of target groups. Meetings for open discussion sessions were held with four identified groups in Phase I. They were:

1) Student Union - University of Calgary;
2) Academics - University of Calgary;
3) ESL students - Alberta Vocational College; and
4) ESL teachers - Alberta Vocational College.

Subsequent to these fact finding sessions, the Committee met to review its findings and observations. This process generated a final draft of the "Report on Immigration and Cross Cultural Understanding". Recommendations considered in the final draft report include:

1) The "English As A Second Language" program should be reviewed to direct its efforts towards meeting current needs of immigrants;
2) Instill community participation, and consider initiative for delivery of pilot "English As A Second Language" programs by community organizations;
3) Establish programs that will enhance skills and resources of new immigrant tradesmen;
4) Encourage students of the "English As A Second Language" program and students of trade school to become financially independent through education and training programs that will utilize, maximize, and build upon the skills and resources of new immigrants;
5) Provide leadership towards establishing equitable accreditation systems through universities, colleges, and professional bodies to maximize the potentials of foreign trained professionals;
6) Promote public understanding and tolerance of the custom and culture of new immigrants; and
7) Initiate dialogue to ensure multiculturalism is advanced in a positive, participatory, and growing experience for all Albertans.

IV. VISION FOR THE 1990's

Immigration and settlement services has enjoyed due attention and care from the Alberta Government. Alberta's Immigration and Settlement Services Advisory Committee is confident the government will continue its efforts to provide quality immigration and settlement services.

For the 1990's, the Committee will follow through with its momentum in the following fronts:

1) To carry out phase 2 of its research on business and settlement opportunities for new Canadians in smaller centres in Alberta. This will include visitation to identified geographical regions set aside for phase 2, and up-dating information on municipalities covered in the phase 1 report;
2) To further pursue issues regarding immigration and cross cultural understanding. In this phase, the Committee will expand target groups to more accurately reflect Alberta's demography;
3) To host forums as an effective means for Albertans to provide input on matters relating to immigration and settlement issues;
4) To review alternatives to better express, and increase awareness of how immigrants have contributed to the socio-economic fabric of Alberta.
5) To provide timely advise to the Minister on matters relating to immigration and settlement in Canada, and with an specific emphasis on matters that have a direct impact on Alberta.
6) To continue to raise the profile of the Advisory Committee, and to promote its acceptance by the public as a credible body of individuals who can make positive contributions to the Province.

7) To hold consultations with other Advisory Committees on Immigration in other Provinces of Canada.

8) To undertake specific tasks that the Minister may assign to the Committee as required and from time to time.

9) To undertake detail studies on specific recommendations contained in this report as shall be directed by the Minister

Further than the above, and for the 1990's, it would be important for us to look beyond our present bounds. The operative words for the future shall be "Immigration and beyond"! The dynamics of these three simple words are limited only by the bounds of our imagination. Our vision for immigration and settlement in the 1990's must indeed be visionary and futuristic.

The Committee will hold sessions to generate thought provoking ideas, and to develop specific action plans to meet the challenges of the 1990's. The Committee is confident that its vision for the 1990's will bring about new impetus for a better Alberta.

APPENDIX A

PROFILE OF IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIRPERSON - The Late Mr. Haider H. Dhanani

An Economist/Accountant, and a Professional Administrator, Mr. Dhanani was a businessman/investor with a number of business enterprises. He was the past President of the Ismaili community in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and had served the community in other capacities for well over 15 years.

MEMBERS

Mr. Malkiat (Mike) Brar - A businessman and President of the Ethnic Canadian Association of Alberta. Presently, Special Assistant to the Premier of Alberta, the Hon. Don R. Getty.

Dr. K.W. Chang - Professor of Mathematics at University of Calgary, and President of Calgary Chinese Cultural Society. Received an Alberta Achievement Award in 1986.

Ms. Daisy Chang - Professional Accountant (C.G.A.) with Revenue Canada, Taxation, trained journalist and a novelist.

Mr. Ernest Flores - Mechanical Engineer and past member of Edmonton's Local Advisory Council on Canada Immigration and Employment, and President of Council of the Council of Edmonton Filipino Association.

Mr. Ziad Jaber - A businessman, member of the Edmonton Multi-cultural Society, and member of the Gaming Commission.

Ms. Dora Lam - Barrister and Solicitor with the Law Firm of Beaumont Church and Scott, Honourary legal advisor of Chinese Public School

and Chinese Elderly Citizens Association, and member of Multicultural Commission.

Mr. Fred W. Law - A Civil Engineer with the City of Edmonton, investor, and Vice President of Sherwood Park Music Festival.

Mr. Giovanni De Maria - International business consultant and President of the Association of Interpreters and Translators of Canada.

Mr. Mehnga Matharu - Export Manager for an Edmonton Engineering firm, and a member of the Punjabi Society of Alberta.

Mr. Dat T. Nguyen - Processing Geophysicist, past President and presently General Secretary of Board of Directors of Calgary Vietnamese Canadian Association, past Chairman of Calgary Multicultural Centre, member of the Advisory Committee to the Federal Business and Development Bank.

Dr. M.M. Parmar - Chief of medical staff at Fort McMurray Regional Hospital.

Mr. Ed A. Quilloy - Associate Director of Calgary District Hospital Group.